

The Sense of Responsibility for the Health As An Important Element of Health Education

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Abstract. Health education is a very important aspect of modern public health, because it should promote health-related lifestyle. Epidemiological data suggest that a significant percentage of both adolescents and adults are characterized by unhealthy lifestyle, especially bad food habits, wrong body posture, physical inactivity, and disturbed biological clock. In the literature, there are a lot of papers which analyzed the effectiveness of lifestyle modification programs. The most important predictors of the effectiveness of these programs could be psychosocial factors which have a strong influence on shaping health behavior, attitude towards health and disease, and lifestyle. One of these factors is the sense of responsibility for the health.

Introduction

Health education is a very important aspect of modern health policy and the public health challenges. It should be stressed that health education has a lot of definitions, because many authors and experts defined it in many ways. For instance, Lawrence Green defined health education as “*a combination of learning experiences designed to facilitate voluntary actions conducive to health.*” For this reason, health education is an important part of health promotion in each country. Some people the term health education and health promotion interchangeably, but there are not synonyms. In medical science, health promotion is defined as a combination of educational and environmental supports for actions and conditions of living conducive to health. [1-4]

Yazachew & Yihenu [5] stress that health education has a two main aims. Firstly, Health education should motivate people to undertake health-promoting behaviour by providing appropriate knowledge, as well as helping to create a positive attitude to health. Secondly, Health education should help people to make decisions about their health. In this context, the educators of health education should develop appropriate skills in adolescents and adults.

Healthy Lifestyle

It should be noted that healthy lifestyle is dimension of health-related lifestyle, but is not a synonyms of it. In literature, there are two form of health-related lifestyle, such as:

- (1) healthy lifestyle which has a positive influence on health;
- (2) unhealthy lifestyle which has a negative influence on health and contributes to multiple psychopathologies. [6]

Epidemiological data suggest that a significant percentage of both adolescents and adults are characterized by unhealthy lifestyle, especially bad food habits, wrong body posture, physical inactivity, and disturbed biological clock [7]. This unhealthy lifestyle could be a cause of many diseases which are often called Lifestyle Diseases or Diseases of Civilization.

Lifestyle Diseases

The most common these diseases are cardiovascular disorders, obesity, diabetes, and cancer. [6]

Cardiovascular Disorders

Cardiovascular diseases are the biggest cause of death among Europeans and around the world. There are some publications which stress that the Global Burden of Disease study estimated that 29.6% of all deaths worldwide (15 616.1 million deaths) were caused by Cardiovascular diseases in 2010. The tendency of the worldwide *prevalence* of Cardiovascular diseases is growing. It should be stressed that Cardiovascular disease includes a number of conditions affecting the structures or function of the heart. They can include: Coronary artery disease; Heart attack; Abnormal heart rhythms or arrhythmias; Heart failure; Heart valve disease; Congenital heart disease; Heart muscle disease (cardiomyopathy); Pericardial disease; Aorta disease and Marfan syndrome, and Vascular disease (blood vessel disease). [8, 9]

Obesity

The other very important lifestyle disease is obesity, because this disease is the fifth leading risk for global deaths. Obesity is associated with an abnormal accumulation of body fat. It should be stressed that an accumulation of body fat is highly dependent on gender. For example, Women generally have a higher percentage of body fat than men. Overweight and obesity account for an estimated 8%-15% of the burden of disease in industrialised countries. World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that more than 1.9 billion adults aged 18 and older were overweight in 2014. In the same year, about 13% of the world's adult population (11% of men and 15% of women) were obese in 2014. [9]

Diabetes

Diabetes is a chronic disease associated with two main causes. Firstly, diabetes could occur when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin. Secondly, this disease could be associated with a situation when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces. It should be noted that Insulin is a hormone which regulates blood sugar. In medical science, there are two types of diabetes:

Type 1 diabetes (insulin-dependent diabetes) is characterized by deficient insulin production, as well as it requires daily administration of insulin.

Type 2 diabetes (non-insulin-dependent) is associated with the body's ineffective use of insulin.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) report, about 8.5% of adults aged 18 years and older had diabetes in 2014. WHO stresses that diabetes was the direct

cause of 1.5 million deaths in 2012. In the same year, high blood glucose was the cause of another 2.2 million deaths. [9]

Cancer

Cancer is not one disease, but a main term for a large group of diseases which could affect any part of the human body. This disease is associated with an abnormal growth of cells. These cells have a tendency to proliferate in an uncontrolled way. Sometimes, Cancer is characterized by metastasize (spread). The most common causes of cancer death are cancers of: lung, liver, stomach, colorectal, breast, and oesophageal cancer. It should be stressed that cancer is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide, accounting for 8.2 million deaths in 2012. [9]

Other Lifestyle Diseases

Additionally, there is evidence to show that lifestyle factors are important in the pathogenesis of disease such as gout, gastrooesophageal reflux disease, osteoporosis, metabolic syndrome, polycystic ovary disease, irritable bowel disease and others. [10, 11]

It should be stressed that there are some studies which showed that lifestyle modification could reduce the risk of these diseases by using effective lifestyle modification programs. [10, 11]

Factor Associated With Lifestyle Modification Programmes

In the literature, there are a lot of papers which analysed the effectiveness of lifestyle modification programs. Currently, It is believed that one of the important predictors of the effectiveness of these programs could be psychosocial factors. It is associated with human developmental aspect. Psychosocial factors have a strong influence on shaping health behaviour, attitude towards health and disease, and lifestyle. [10, 11, 12]

One of the interesting psychological factors which can be characterized by relationship the effectiveness of these programs is the sense of responsibility for the health. [11, 12]

Sense of Responsibility For The Health

Sense of responsibility for health is a relatively new contract in health psychology. Preliminary attempts to define a sense of responsibility for the health was made by Suchocka. [13] This author emphasized that the starting point for the development of a sense of responsibility for the health is the health perception. This perception is related to the assessment of health as an important value in lifetime. Suchocka's [13] identification of '*sense of responsibility for health*' as an important factor in health-related behaviour. The high level of sense of responsibility for health is associated with the need for the greatest knowledge about health-related activities which can keep optimal body state, and reduce the risk of the disease [13].

The sense of responsibility for health construct is defined as self-perceptions relating to motivation and use of various behavioural strategies to keep good health [14]. The empirical verification of sense of responsibility for health was taken by Adamus and Jaworski [15]. These authors have demonstrated the existence of two aspects of sense of responsibility: active involvement and adequate behaviour. Whereas active involvement concerns cognitive and motivational aspects related to the need for undertaking appropriate actions to maintain good health, adequate behaviours concern actions taken to maintain health or make improvements [14, 15]

Sense of Responsibility For The Health In Healthy People

Adamus and Jaworski [16] emphasize that sense of responsibility for health is an important factor in the context of health promotion in adolescents and young adults. In their studies, they analysed the level of sense of responsibility for the health in adolescents and young adults (n=656) group which was divided into two dimensions: (1) active involvement in taking care of their own health (HSR-AI), and (2) appropriate behaviour (HSR-AB). Next, a group of subjects were divided into 3 different age groups (group1: 15 years old - n=75, group 2: 19-20 year old - n=202, group 3: 21-25 years old, n=380). The highest belongs to participants aged 21-25, the lowest to adolescents aged 15. The groups differ in terms of the HSR-AI - the highest values characterized young adults aged 21-25, and the lowest at age 15 there is no difference in the dimension HSR-AB. For this reason, Health Sense of Responsibility increases with age (among adolescents and young adults) and may be associated with behaviour that protect against chronic diseases. This pattern has implications in terms of cognitive and pragmatically.

In a study carried out by Jaworski and Bojar¹, the authors demonstrated that sense of responsibility for health is an important psychological feature in the context of the frequency of physical activity. This paper emphasized that women, who undertake regular physical activity, have showed a higher intensity of sense of responsibility for the health than women with lower physical activity. According to the authors, the demonstrated phenomenon could be explained by a greater awareness of the relationship between lifestyle and health status. For this reason, It can be noted that sense of responsibility for health is a one of the key factors which influences on undertaking health behaviour. Therefore, it seems reasonable to create lifestyle modification programmes which shape this personality trait in young people.

The Sense of Responsibility For The Health In Ill Persons

Sak et al. [17] emphasized that an appropriate level of responsibility for health determines the higher level of motivation to treatment during disease. Similar observations were noted by Jaworski and Adamus [14]. These researchers carried out study examined the relationship between sense of responsibility for health, health suggestibility, and dispositional optimism in diabetic patients (n=110) with (n=56) and without (n=54) complications/accompanying diseases.

Adamus, Jaworski & Owczarek [18] analyzed the relation between the sense of responsibility for health (HRS), and the frequency of health-related behaviour undertaking in a sample of patients with back pains. Group of subjects consisted of 100 patients with back pains aged from 19 to 75 years old. In this study, authors observed that personality trait, which is the sense of responsibility for health (HSR), concerns the protection of health by Active Involvement (HSR-AI), and readiness to Adequate Behaviour (HSR-AB) affects the health-related behaviour undertaking. Forming this trait during the development process can contribute to an increase in the frequency of behaviour undertaking which could have a positive impact on: a correct eating habits, a prophylactic behaviour, positive mental attitude (The effect of gender was also observed); as well as daily health habits (The effect of pain intensity and age were also observed).

¹This study was prepared as part of the Bojar's Master Thesis which was supervised by Dr. Jaworski

Summary

1. Sense of responsibility for health is an important psychological variable which has a relationship with a healthy lifestyle in both healthy and ill persons.
2. Lifestyle modification programs should strengthen the severity of sense of responsibility for health among teenagers and young adults.
3. Health education should take into account the psychological and social correlates of health, as well as and model health behaviour, which have a positive impact on health.

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